

Studies on competence in a multinational environment

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1. Introduction

In line with the progress of the 21st century, our ethnic, cultural and linguistic environment is constantly changing. Based on a lot of traditions, beliefs, and values, we can track down the most diverse societies throughout history. As a result, the similarities and differences that differentiate people need to be recognized, acknowledged, and accepted. In the absence of this, daily communication between members of different nations is not smooth [1].

More than 6,000 languages are spoken in 191 countries around the world, and the approximately a total of 32 thousand Americans speak 329 languages other than English at home [2]. It is much easier to perceive a lack of cultural competence than its presence.

Above all, let us define cultural, linguistic and socio-cultural competences.

Culture consists of a number of integral parts, starting with the most obvious and most spectacular parts, such as the language of communication, habits and traditions through invisible values like assumptions, mindsets and thoughts. *Cultural competence* is the ability to function effectively within the culture. This includes competence in the mother tongue as well as an understanding of cultural differences. *Linguistic competence* refers to the unconscious knowledge of grammar, allowing the speaker to use and understand language. The language competence used by Noam

Chomsky and other linguists refers to innate language skills that allow a person to make sounds and meanings compatible [3].

The terms culture and linguistics refer to integrated patterns of human behavior that include language, thoughts, communication, actions, habits, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or other groups (e.g. gender identity/gender expression, age), national origin, sexual orientation, disability). Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that connect in a system or community of professionals and enable them to work effectively in intercultural situations [4]. Culture and language can influence the behavior of individuals.

Sociocultural competence is also a complex phenomenon. According to [5], it contains the following components.

- linguistic-cultural element – knowledge of lexical elements with sociocultural semantics (such as greetings, addressing people and saying goodbye);
- sociolinguistics – knowledge of the linguistic characteristics of social classes, different generations, genders, social groups;

STUDIES ON COMPETENCE IN A MULTINATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: In today's multicultural world and at the age of globalization it goes without saying that possessing language skills, intercultural competence, cultural intelligence, knowledge, skills, mindset, awareness and other essential skills, attitudes and competencies for effective communication is imperative. The article introduces the basic concept of competences, supporting and emphasizing the importance of linguistic and cultural competence with examples. The aim of this paper is to describe the process of the development of sociocultural competence and its components based on the analysis of many sources in the international literature. In the first part of the study, social, cultural, and linguistic competencies, as well as their diversity are analysed. Cultural diversity is underpinned by a variety of factors, including age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, origin, race, religion, and gender, among others. Conceptual definitions of culture are also presented. We also deal with linguistic diversity that accompanies cultural diversity. The analysis of language, culture, and communication follows a brief description of communication competence. Cultural and linguistic competence is vital, as today peoples and nations are intensely intermingled, living in the same society and interacting in the workplace, so the problem of developing socio-cultural competence is currently of particular importance. The developed socio-cultural competence guarantees effective communication between cultures, i.e. proper interaction with representatives of other cultures. At the end conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made.

Keywords: competence, language awareness, culture, sociocultural, multicultural, interaction, communication, differences, cultural competence, linguistic.

– cultural components – knowledge of cultural peculiarities, customs, traditions, norms of behavior, etiquette in the English-speaking countries and the ability of proper understanding and use of the communication process, while remaining the medium of another culture.

Sociocultural competence is the ability to apply multicultural knowledge and skills in intercultural communication. It also means that we are tolerant with people of other nationalities.

Language and culture are related. This means that without language, culture cannot be fully understood or passed on to future generations. Without language skills, the effectiveness of intercultural interactions will be limited.

2. Methods

During the research international works have been studied and the analysis relies on scientific books and articles. As in the area of social sciences, most data are 'invisible' (opinions and views, attitudes, mindsets), instead of collecting primary data, document analysis was applied.

3. Results

3.1. Language, culture and communication

Both language and culture play a role in communication as both carry meaning. First, the language is syntactic, semantic and pragmatic meaning for the language users to communicate [6].

On the other hand, culture is meaningful, and cultural meanings are expressed by means of behaviour patterns, such as language [7].

In order to have successful communication between languages and cultures our culturally different interaction standards, as well as people's values and thoughts must be understood [8]. Linguistically correct sentences can sometimes cause misunderstandings or confusion if they are in a different cultural context [9].

3.2. Communication competence (CC)

Communicative competence (CC concept) was introduced by [10], which suggests that not only the grammatical rules of the language should be used, but also to be able to tell when, where and to whom should these sentences be used properly [11].

In foreign language learning CC refers to a student, who can use a language appropriately from societal, linguistic and practical considerations [12]. In later studies by [13], four different components make up communication competence: grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

According to [14], grammatical competence is the competence that is associated with language acquisition. Discourse competence is when students have to form sentences from a series of expressions. Socio-linguistic competence is knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of language, while strategic competence is an element, used to compensate for incomplete knowledge in order to maintain communication.

From this model, we conclude that competence in effective communication should include not only linguistic, but also sociolinguistic knowledge [15]. Inseparable relationship between language and culture suggests that foreign language learning means learning one aspect of the language [16].

We have to connect to our own culture with the awareness of all its strength and limits, knowledge and skills [17]. Care should be taken not to make assumptions that could lead to inappropriate treatment of the individual or research bias [18].

Culture influences normative cultural values, language, and beliefs, among other things. Normal cultural values (expectations of interpersonal interaction) include nonverbal gestures, body language, level of formality, and expression of respect. Language, even when spoken fluently, rolls obstacles in front of us.

The modern world is quite controversial. On the one hand, globalization comes to the fore, and on the other hand, inter-ethnic relations are deteriorating and ethnic conflicts are becoming stronger [19]. Most scholars argue that ethnic conflict destabilizes society and threatens socio-economic development. Most international conflicts are of a socio-cultural nature: language, religion, norms, values, customs, traditions, stereotypes, national symbols, differences in thinking and behavior, and so on [2].

4. Discussion

Cultural and linguistic competence is vital, as today peoples and nations are intensely intermingled, living in the same society and interacting in the workplace, so the problem of developing socio-cultural competence is currently of particular importance. The developed socio-cultural competence guarantees effective communication between cultures, i.e. proper interaction with representatives of other cultures.

Cultural competence is based on training and culturally appropriate materials. The CRASH model is proposed during the trainings [20]:

- **C:** culture (importance of culture in interaction)
- **R:** respect (respect for the culture of other peoples)
- **A:** assess and affirm (evaluate and strengthen culture, including the positive feedback)
- **S:** sensitivity (sensitivity to another person's culture and the impact of one's own culture is a key element)
- **H:** humility (humility should also be added, as few people become experts in other cultures).

Culture and language teaching are inseparable, and culture is always embedded, integrated into the language learning environment [16].

5. Conclusions

The process of acquiring language skills facilitates the development of characteristics, necessary for intercultural interactions. Attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness can be transferred as relevant elements and applied in the general context of culture.

Language skills and intercultural competence promote the knowledge and skills, needed for intercultural effectiveness.

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